



COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO
STANDARD PRACTICE

NO 14-1.31

Revised issue

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EFFECTIVE 8/92

DEPARTMENT

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

SUBJECT

MEDICAL RECORDS CENTRALIZED OFF
SITE STORAGE

APPROVED

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Rudy Lopez, Director

I. PURPOSE

All closed outpatient medical records will be maintained in one file room for continuity of treatment within DBH (San Bernardino County Department of Behavioral Health).

II. POLICY

- A. All DBH clinics will return their closed medical records to the Medical Record Section in the BHRC (Behavioral Health Resource Center), 850 E. Foothill Blvd., Rialto, CA 92376
- B. When opening a client for services at DBH, the clinic will order the closed chart (if any) from the Medical Record Section.
- C. All medical records and client identifying confidential material will be hand carried by a designated DBH employee.

III. PROCEDURES

A. MEDICAL RECORD PROCEDURES IN C A M P

To have consistency in a large Behavioral Health system, all clerical and administrative procedures including outpatient Medical Record procedures have been entered into a Medical Record Manual called CAMP (Clerical Administrative Manual of Procedures). All DBH clerical staff must follow the standardized medical record procedures in CAMP.

B. ACCESS TO DBH MEDICAL RECORD SECTION

The DBH Medical Record Section is open from 7:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., Monday through Friday. The office is located in the DBH-BHRC building, 850 E. Foothill Blvd., Rialto, CA 92374. The main phone number for the Medical Record Section is (909) 421-9350.

C. AVAILABILITY OF THE MEDICAL RECORD

Under the direction of an Accredited Record Technician, the Medical Record staff will maintain the records in a confidential manner. The staff will safeguard the records against loss, defacement, tampering or use by unauthorized person.

Persons authorized by law to access such records including but not limited to, persons authorized pursuant to Health and Safety Code, Section 25250 et seq, "those professional persons who are providing services to the patient and authorized representatives of DBH.

D. CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE MEDICAL RECORD

All new employees of DBH sign an OATH OF CONFIDENTIALITY. This Oath is maintained in the employee's personnel file.

Orientation for the Medical Record Section staff includes instruction and discussion of Confidentiality to assure understanding. Confidentiality is addressed annually at the employee's performance review.

E. DISASTER PLANS FOR MEDICAL RECORDS

DBH Master Disaster Plan includes the procedures for the Medical Record staff. These procedures are reviewed annually in a Medical Record Section monthly meeting. If a disaster were to threaten the Medical Record Section the supervising person at the time of disaster would direct the staff in what action to take.

1. During a flood, those records threatened would be removed to a safe area while continuing to protect confidentiality.
2. During a fire, the County procedure is to vacate your building on hearing the fire alarm. All employees are instructed as to the placement of the alarm pull and the fire extinguisher in the building. Fire drills are held monthly. Extinguisher training is held annually.
3. A specialist would be consulted if DBH medical records were damaged.

NOTE: If the medical records receive water damaged, they should be packaged in plastic bags and then frozen. They must be kept frozen until a specialist can take over. A disaster specialist is found through a private Record Storage Facility.

F. MONITORING SYSTEM FOR THE MEDICAL RECORD

1. MPI (Master Patient Index)

Before August 1991, The DBH MPI was kept manually by the Medical Record Section. In August 1991, DBH installed a computer system, SIMON, and the responsibility for the MPI was given to the Computer Services Section. A back up copy of all MPI-SIMON data is kept off site in a disaster-protected facility.

2. OUTGUIDES

When a chart is pulled from file an Outguide is inserted in place of the file. The Outguide contains a hand written card with the client's name, medical record number, date and clinic where the chart is being sent.

3. SIMON (the DBH Computer System)

A client is registered in SIMON the first time they are seen at DBH. Each time a client is seen for treatment thereafter, SIMON is updated with dates, diagnosis, clinic name, service, clinician, etc., for both DBH Clinics and DBH Contract Agencies.

4. CHART TRACKING

Tracking of the charts is done with a computer program in the Medical Record Section. The program reports where a chart was sent for treatment, audit, review, storage, etc.

5. PROCEDURE TO LOCATE MISFILES

The Medical Record staff are instructed on how to search for a misfile. The procedure explains where to look, who to check with, and how to report misfiles. A general search for misfiles is part of the Purging procedure and also during general filing procedures.

G. PHYSICAL PLANT

The outpatient Medical Record Section and Storage Facility is located in the Behavioral Health Resource Center, 850 E. Foothill Blvd., Rialto, CA 92376. It occupies an office for 6 FTE's and a separate chart (file) room. There are 3 fire safety doors for entry and exit.

The building is air-conditioned and has fire sprinklers. The office contains the standard office equipment, chart files, microfilm files, and a computer Imaging System for the Archiving of inactive records and Tracking of records. The file room chart shelves are open-faced vertically adjusted with the top open space approved by the Fire Marshall. The shelves are bolted down to protect against seismic activity. The service aisles meet the standards of the American's with Disability Act.

H. RETENTION OF MEDICAL RECORDS

DBH retains medical records in compliance with California Title 22 #77143 (c): Patient health records or reproductions thereof, shall be safely preserved for a minimum of seven years following discharge of the patient, except that the records of unemancipated minors shall be kept at least one year after such minor has reached the age of 18 years and, in any case, not less than seven years.

It is the policy of DBH not to destroy inactive Medical Records before 10 years. This covers the time period that any lawsuit against the County and/or DBH may be filed.

I. ARCHIVING OF INACTIVE MEDICAL RECORDS

When a medical record is inactive for 4 years, it is purged from the files and archived. Over the years archiving has been done by microfilming, imaging, and records storage.

J. RELEASE OF INFORMATION BY AUTHORIZATION & SUBPOENA

The Medical Record Section has Correspondence Clerks trained in regulations, policy, and procedure for releasing psychiatric patient information. They handle the release of information on the DBH-BHRC active/open charts, on all DBH closed charts, and on all requests by subpoena/court order for both active and closed charts.

All DBH satellite clinics and Contract Agencies will have a clerk or clinician trained in regulations, policy, and procedure for the release of psychiatric client information. They will handle the release on clients open in their clinic. The staff of the satellite clinics will consult with the Medical Record Correspondence Clerk or Supervisor if there is a question. When a release is received on a client that has been closed in their clinic and the chart has been returned to the Medical Record Section, the satellite clinic will forward the request to Medical Records as soon as possible.

K. RETRIEVAL TIME FOR REQUESTED MEDICAL RECORDS BY THE CLINICS

For satellite clinics, the record is pulled from file within 1 hour of the request and prepared for pick-up by the clinic's designated person. A regular DBH delivery person does a pick-up and delivery every day. If information is needed on the client before the next delivery, it can be faxed to the appropriate person.

L. SHREDDING OF CONFIDENTIAL MEDICAL RECORD MATERIAL

DBH has a contract with San Bernardino County Central Stores Department for shredding of Confidential material. The Central Stores Standard Practice Manual covers all aspects of Confidentiality that comply with required regulations of DBH Medical Records.

M. TRANSPORTATION OF THE MEDICAL RECORD

The DBH medical record must be always HAND CARRIED BY A DESIGNATED EMPLOYEE between DBH Medical Records and the DBH satellite clinics. The medical record must never be sent by County interoffice mail or left in the DBH or BHRC mail- room.

N. UNIT MEDICAL RECORD

A "Unit" record is maintained on each patient as required by CA Title 22. The same medical record number is always used and each outpatient treatment episode is added to the chart in chronological order. The record is filed in terminal digit order. The medical record number is found in the DBH computer (MPI file). The client can be found by any of the following; alphabetically, alias, by social security number, and by account number.

NOTE: This SPM was written specifically at the request of the San Bernardino District Manager of State Licensing and Certification in August 1992. It is to satisfy requirements of licensing and certification needs of satellite clinics as it relates to storage of closed charts.